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Canada's New Government and SIAST partner to improve foreign credential recognition

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, February 24, 2007 —Parliamentary Secretary Lynne Yelich, on behalf of the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development today announced $295,000 for the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) to improve foreign credential recognition by assessing immigrants' competency and credentials before arriving in Canada.

"Immigration issues are a key concern for many Canadian communities and businesses, and Canada's New Government is delivering on its commitment on foreign credentials recognition," said Ms. Yelich. "By creating a quicker, more responsive assessment model we will help strengthen the Canadian economy and improve the integration of skilled immigrants into the Canadian work force."

SIAST will receive funding for the project through Canada's New Government's Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) program. The project will develop a model for delivering overseas information services, assessment services, and skills training to potential immigrants to determine an immigrant's credentials, competencies and qualifications before coming to Canada. The model, once established, would be made available to other jurisdictions.

"Saskatchewan is implementing a bold immigration strategy to attract 5,000 newcomers annually by 2008," said the Honourable Pat Atkinson, Minister Responsible for Immigration. "This project will complement the initiatives of our Saskatchewan immigration program by making it easier for employers to identify potential new employees worldwide that have the skills necessary to be successful in the Saskatchewan labour market."

"The SIAST foreign credential model will leverage our expertise in skills assessment and our international partnerships to give Canadian employers an edge in the competition for skilled immigrants," says SIAST president and CEO Dr. Robert G. McCulloch. "Our goal is to link employers with pre-screened applicants whose skills match their labour needs," said Dave Harvey SIAST's Director of International Services.

The FCR Program has made significant progress in developing and strengthening Canada's FCR infrastructure by focusing on FCR initiatives in the health professions and engineering, building FCR capacity overseas and helping employers in non-regulated occupations develop their own FCR processes.

Through the FCR program the Canada's New Government is working closely with provincial/territorial governments, regulatory and educational bodies, professional associations and other stakeholders to ensure immigrants can make full use of their talents and experience to the benefit of Canada.

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This news release is available in alternative formats upon request.

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